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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

Reflections on ‘Occupy Fanning’

JENNIFER SKOGLUND
CONTRIBUTOR

On May 12, 2016, amidst the excitement and angst of final exams, Connecticut College student protesters occupied the administrative offices of Fanning, demanding accountability for administrative incompetence. Students would continue to occupy the building until the school year came to an end.

This occupation was sparked by the administration’s response to another instance of student activism: the posting of flyers by Connecticut College Students in Solidarity with Palestine (CSSP) in dorms. These flyers drew attention to the injustice of Israeli occupation of Palestine and detailed the displacement of Palestinian people and unlawful demolition of their homes, citing facts and statistics from Israeli peace organizations.

It didn’t take long for the administration to respond to the poster protest. That evening, Professor Canton, then interim Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, sent out an email informing the student body both that a bias incident report had been filed around the flyer protest, and that the administration would be investigating the incident immediately.

Students found this response inappropriate and biased towards the CSSP at best, as the posting of flyers had complied with school rules regarding student protests and no violations of the honor code had been made. This response was also received as proof of the administration’s negligence toward previous complaints of bias incidents, which apparently did not merit campus-wide communications, nor administrative action.

Students decided to occupy Fanning to demand accountability for the unequal treatment of bias incidents. As the protest gained momentum, additional grievances regarding administrative failures began to surface. I contacted the authors of the Occupy Fanning blog site to gain a better perspective on the protest’s evolution. The protest began, they said, “with a small group protesting the interim Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion’s all campus email that students targeted experienced as punitive and threatening. However quickly (within hours of the occupation) those students were joined by many other constituencies who had experienced incompetent handling of bias cases and other administrative failures.”

Mishandling of and non-response to bias incidents involving homophobia, racism, and sexual harassment began to become unearthed. One can find reports of these



incidents and their administrative responses detailed in full on the Occupy Fanning blog, which has accrued no less than 24,000 views. The blog’s first post, “Why We’re Here,” details the motivations for the occupation. Upon occupying Fanning and conversing circularly with faculty, students “came to realize that the problems at the College are deeper than [they] previously understood. Specifically, through this process, they came to realize that the President has cultivated an environment of control, surveillance, job exploitation, and repression that inhibits the work of the College.”

One instance provided in support of this is the filtering of mass communications through the Communications Office, which the movement cites as amounting to censorship and a serious impairment of the ability of individual departments and offices to do their jobs. The other is a lack of agency and autonomy on the part of the Office of Institutional Equity and Inclusion.

With this target of broader institutional reform, the Occupy movement began to highlight additional structural grievances. Among these was the absence of institutional support for interdisciplinary programs, faculty of color, and Africana Studies. Concerns around the Africana Studies Program included the “diversity tax” used previously to fund the program, and, in response to upset faculty and students alike over this tax, an unsustainable funding “gift” from the



Photo courtesy of Hallie Carmen

Artist Profile: Donglin Li

HALLIE CARMEN
CONTRIBUTOR

Donglin Li felt that he didn’t have the opportunity to explore his creative side until coming to the United States for high school. Growing up in Wuhan, a city located in central China, Li did not have many opportunities to delve into his creative interests due to the intense academic pressures he faced back in China. It wasn’t until he came to the US for high school did he start considering studying art.

A senior Art major and East Asian Studies minor at Conn, Li is often seen in Cummings working late into the morning on his artwork. He is currently working on his senior thesis (ask him more about this and

what exactly this entails). In the fall semester of his Junior Year, Li studied abroad at the prestigious Central Saint Martins art school in London, England

The College Voice: When did you start making art?

Donglin Li: I didn’t really start until high school when I had more time in exploring things I wanted to do. It was really during my high school years that I started thinking about and exploring the artist side of me. [Growing up in China] my parents didn’t really pay attention to my artistic side. I was really on my own. In school you didn’t have many art classes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

President to tide the program over for the next 2 years. This lack of institutional support, the Occupy Blog states, “reflects a pattern of bias and exploitation in the name of the same “diversity” from which the College profits, basically through uncompensated and even disparaged labor...All at the same time that the college sells its credentials of “full participation” and “inclusion” to gain new clients.”

I questioned the Occupy blog authors about their perception of the administration’s overall response to the movement and the grievances raised concerning institutional reform. Their response:

“We know that our movement received broad support from alumni, members of the community, faculty, staff, students, and people from other universities. The administra-

tion seemed to be very concerned with putting out the fire before graduation but did not address any of the real concerns we raised.”

I also spoke with D. Afeni McNeely Cobham, Associate Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, who was present for much of the occupation. On the issue of the unequal treatment of bias incidents, she said,

“The senior administration felt that there was something that needed to be said, campus-wide, about tone and culture. There may be issues on campus which become so pervasive...that it requires someone to open up the dialogue and say, “We’re aware of this as an administration”; we want people to know--our stakeholders who watch the emails outside of campus and the ones who

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The ongoing death of journalism concerns me.

An arrest warrant was issued against journalist Amy Goodman on September 8 for her coverage of police violence against protestors in North Dakota. Protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline have finally made national news in the past months, thanks to journalists like Goodman, who have disrupted the mainstream media's silence on the issue. Goodman is the Executive Producer of *Democracy Now!*, a news source that is committed to covering important issues in critical ways and creating a truly free press in an age of corporate news.

But the cost of doing journalism that challenges power concerns me.

Killing of journalists in Chhatisgarh for critical rural reporting concerns me, as does the imprisonment of Aljazeera staff in Egypt, the silencing and murders of journalists in Ukraine, the perpetual news blackout on issues of poor people and the over-production of clickbait, it all concerns me. Silence where speech would count, and when speech is penalized, concerns me.

Writing from a newsroom that is relatively insulated from many of these larger repressive forces, I am concerned about how we at the *Voice* can use our speech to put an end to silences, instead of speaking just to hear our own voices, to entertain each other, to enjoy how good our name looks in print and how good our position titles look in our resume. We aspire to be more than the student club we are designated to be. We see ourselves as journalists, student journalists, but journalists no less, and we align ourselves with the dying business of critical print journalism. And even as we do not contend with direct assaults, and do not write stories that are a matter of life and death, we hope to concern ourselves, and you, dear reader, with stories that are written with a regard for the power of the printed word. We hope, as we put together the *Voice*, to keep in mind the world in which we live and in which our campus sits, and to keep in mind the people who need us to break silences, both on campus and in the community.

In the pages ahead of you is the first issue of the *Voice* of the year, containing news, art, critique, photography, fiction, research, interviews - assembled with seriousness, love, and a great deal of (what I thought was) fresh and contagious energy. I hope that the *Voice* reflects some of the concerns I have been thinking about; I hope some of these concern you too; and I hope to hear from you about the experience of sharing concerns with us through this newspaper. It's been an honor to produce this issue; it feels like one small victory in our own small fight for journalism's future.

-Aparna

This year, I managed to avoid the inaugural episode of clicking, dragging, and screaming that is *The College Voice's* publication ritual. And I'll admit it; I was probably less stressed here in Managua, Nicaragua than I would have been there in New London, Connecticut. But, I can say with clichéd yet total honesty that I did, in fact, miss *Voice* production. So although I won't be writing or editing for the *Voice* this semester, I do plan to read it religiously from abroad (maybe with the exception of Sports; sorry guys) so I can remain up to date on the strides the current staff is taking, which I expect to be both massive and many. While I'm missing this paper, I'm learning a lot—like that I'd let myself forget more Spanish than I thought, that getting it back is actually more rewarding than painful, and that I am, surprisingly, not horrible at making tortillas.

Born mainly out of goodwill and partially out of self-interest, I wish everyone involved with the *Voice*—from senior editorial staff to occasional readers—a successful (and fun) semester. I'll be trying to keep my mind off of this publication while writing in Spanish (because code switching is hard, guys). I'll especially miss leaving frequent, rambling, allegedly “harsh” comments on Google Docs, so brace yourselves, writers; those will be back.

-Maia

THE COLLEGE VOICE

“The views and opinions expressed in *The College Voice* are strictly those of student authors, and not of Connecticut College. All content and editorial decisions remain in the hands of the students; neither the College's administration nor its faculty exercise control over the content.”

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Community Bulletin

Shain Library was named 2016 New Landmark Library by Library Journal. More than one year after its renovation, Shain is one of five libraries nationwide to win the award. The journal cited its natural lighting, spacious reading rooms, and comfortable seating as key elements of its usefulness to students. Judges also highlighted the Technology Commons in the basement as an exceptional feature.

Activist and community leader Rosa Clemente spoke on Thursday Sept. 15 to help jumpstart Latino Heritage Month at Conn. Clemente, who was also the running mate for 2008 Green Party presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney, encouraged students and faculty to be active members of the college community and to work to defy typical stereotypes.

On Friday Sept. 16, digital artist Miao Xiaochun enlightened students and faculty on new ways of thinking about visual art. One of China’s most influential new media artists, he is known worldwide for his 3D animations, in which he has revised works such as Michelangelo’s The Last Judgement and Raphael’s School of Athens to imagine different points of view. In his visit, he also highlighted the importance of breaking national and cultural barriers in creating art, as he thinks about ideas from throughout history to generate his modern masterpieces.

On Saturday, Sept.17, “Gazzo” played in downtown New London at the Hygienic Art Gallery. The event was sponsored by SAC, who gave away 500 free tickets to students who signed up at Cro. Round trip buses ran throughout the duration of the concert. Students described the scene as having lots of dancing and fun lighting. The Hygienic Art Gallery has hosted concerts in the past that have brought in a crowd of Conn students. Events such as this are a fun way for students to engage with the community on the weekends.

The Connecticut College Asian & Asian American Student Association (CCASA) announced on Wednesday, September 13, has decided to cancel their annual multicultural Asian dance show, Fusion due to concerns about cultural appropriation and misrepresentation in the show. “Fusion had increasingly been catering to white students as both its participants and its audience,” wrote CCASA representatives. Concerns also included inadequate funding and costume availability as well as the “unsustainable” scale of the show in terms of money, technology, and time commitment required.

Fusion will be replaced this year with an arts festival seeking to represent Asians and Asian Americans in a variety of artistic disciplines.

Sports Corner



Photos Courtesy of Olga Nikolaeva

This Week’s Scores

Soccer		Cross Country		Sailing	
Women	3-0	Women	2nd Place	Trinity College	Invitational
Men	3-1				
Water Polo		5th Place	UMASS-Dartmouth	Invitational	4th Place
Men	1-5				
Field Hockey		Men	3rd Place	Trinity College	Invitational
Women	0-3				
		2nd Place		UMASS-Dartmouth Invitational	

Making Sense of Connections

LILLY NOBLE CONTRIBUTOR

As a first year at Connecticut College, I and about 500 other students are the guinea pigs in the new curricular experiment, Connections. The goal of this curriculum is to engage students in the academic work for their major as well as finding its relationship to the world we live in today. It emphasizes linking global and local aspects to the many classes you are studying at Conn. Choosing a pathway is the first step. All the pathways have core faculty as well as a curricular itinerary. Once you choose a pathway, you take a Thematic Inquiry course that will help you develop a question related to your pathway. This question will be the focus of much of your work

throughout your time at Conn. All incoming students from the class of 2020 are required to partake in Connections. Students have to take a First Year Seminar and complete one Conn Course during your first year or sophomore year. Then, you have the choice of joining one of the designed pathways. If you do choose a pathway, then you are only required to complete courses in four of the five modes of inquiry. If you do not a pathway you must complete courses in all five of the modes of inquiry. Five Modes of Inquiry: Creative Expression Critical Interpretation and Analysis Quantitative and Formal Reasoning Scientific Inquiry and Analysis Social and Historical Inquiry

When talking to students in the class of 2020, I was curious as to what role the Connections curriculum played in their decision to come here. Kaya Blumenthal-Rothchild, a first-year from New York said, “I will probably be partaking in one of the Pathways, although Connections was not a factor in my decision to attend Connecticut College. I was confused on what it really was until orientation, and even now I am still a little confused. That being said, I think the idea of what it is is cool.” Erik Grant, another first-year from Massachusetts, said, “In all honesty I did not understand the details about the Connections program. But I was excited to go to a college with a progressive attitude about education. I was glad to hear that I could tailor my education to

best fit my needs. As of now, I am still confused about the details of the pathways program. If I discover that one of the pathways will help me attain my goals and interests me academically, I will partake in one of the pathways.” Despite the confusion, most students that I talked to had a positive outlook on Connections. It is definitely a new way for students to plan their education during college. The class of 2020 and the class of 2021 are not required to choose a pathways but the class of 2022 will be. It will be interesting to see how this program works in the future and how it will help strengthen the connections between what we learn here at college and what is happening in the world today. •

Are Food Insecurities a Problem on Campus?

JULIA KABACK
CONTRIBUTOR

As a millennial, your parents probably told you that breakfast was the most important meal of the day. You would dive into a well-balanced breakfast and probably didn't have to worry about where and when your next meal would come from. For some college students their next meal is a puzzle. In a recent poll conducted by Feeding America, 49.3% of college students chose academic expenses such as textbooks and laptops, over food. Almost half of college students would rather go hungry and focus on their studies.

These students represent a new generation of college students. Many are struggling to find food and have looked to campus food pantries to satisfy their hunger. These struggles have been called, "Food Insecurities," by the Department of Agriculture with good reason. Ronald C. Jackson, dean of student affairs at Brooklyn College in New York City was quoted in a recent New York Times article saying, "People lack access to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle." These lifestyles are further tested with the amount of academic rigor associated with particular institutions. It is not just that students

don't have time to eat, rather they lack the resources to do so.

To combat the problem, colleges and universities across the nation have opened food pantries. These pantries, run by schools such as State University at Stony Brook, Michigan State, and the University of Maryland are a few of more than 184 schools around the country, that are supplying emergency food supplies to students. In a recent article from *Higher Education Today*, Christopher Nullem attributes these higher numbers to the rise of nontraditional college students, and higher tuition prices, that cause numbers of students to choose opportunities over their appetites. This, in turn, causes them anxiety and stress.

Are food insecurities an issue on the campus here at Conn? I reached out to both Christopher Manfredi, the General Manager of Board Plan and Victor Arcelus, Dean of Students. When I asked Mr. Manfredi how many students are currently on a full meal plan, I learned that in the college's Comprehensive Fee, all students are entitled to a full meal plan. However, if they choose to live in housing with a kitchen they can opt for a reduced meal plan. It is important to consider that there are a select

number of students who choose to commute to the college on a daily basis. Dean Arcelus says that the biggest food insecurity that students face at the college is how they will eat when they stay on campus over breaks. The college is working to improve access to break meals by allowing students to stay in houses, such as Lazrus, that are equipped with kitchens and also by providing them with gift cards to area grocery stores to help supplement the cost of meals.

While I realize that we are fortunate to have real food on our plates, we should acknowledge the work it takes to prepare the food. It is important to eat, because proper nutrition is a key element in succeeding in school. The students who face such insecurities, struggle to find affordable, healthy food. David A. Tomar, in an article for *The Best Schools*, argues that malnutrition is a real issue on college campuses. Food gives the brain substance and allows for more focus. Students who eat well-balanced diets are shown to have made deans lists all over the country, and are also more active in class discussions. In conclusion, students at Conn should take advantage of having full meal plans and make healthy eating choices. •

Hermine a Near Miss, but College Prepares for Anything

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN
CONTRIBUTOR

As the imminent dawn of college approached, first-years wisely overestimated while packing. Once in their separate dorms, they shoved granola bars, packs of water bottles, and the odd first aid kit under their beds, having no clue as to what surprises campus life would bring them.

After one week into the school year, Conn was already facing impending Tropical Storm Hermine, as well as homework deadlines on Moodle. Fresh, summer mornings turned into split-second showers and winds that flipped umbrellas. As night approached, the Emergency Response Team emailed the campus community, warning against falling tree branches and giving preparation advice if the power ever blinked out. In the second email sent out that Labor Day weekend, Richard Madonna, Vice President of Finance and Administration and also chair of the Emergency Response Team wrote, "I urge students – and all faculty and staff who are on campus tonight – to be mindful of your safety and limit your outdoor movement on campus for the remainder of the night." Meanwhile, young hopefuls were venturing out to their clubs' first meeting of the year. Near Becker House, a fallen tree damaged cars.

In the midst of the storm that never quite fully hit, the campus was forced to consider the college's policy on storm preparedness and the importance of Connecticut College's

Emergency Medical Services – members of which linger in the background of events, close at hand, ready to rush in with the necessary care before the ambulance arrives. They work at club sporting events and on weekend nights with Campus Safety – just in case.

The Emergency Response Team, however, is ready for nature well in advance. "When it comes to weather and storms, the moment we see any chance of inclement weather coming our way, the team will begin to discuss preparations, supplies on hand, potential risks, and how to mitigate the risks, and then we begin to set up regular conference calls to monitor the weather and discuss actions," said Madonna.

If the situation becomes critical, the College will post on its social media pages and email, call, and text the campus community. "And, when the routine business of the College is interrupted, we also post a banner on every page of the website – yellow for business interruptions, red for serious emergencies," remarked Stewart Smith, director of Campus Safety.

As to losing electricity, Smith explained, "If the power went out on campus, we do have backup generators that power some areas, such as the library and Harris Refectory, so we can keep our computer systems running and provide food to our students. We also have the ability to bring in generators that can be moved around campus as appropriate, so we can support other needs as they arise."

Regardless, students and staff should take it on themselves to be cautious and well-equipped before the next calamity strikes campus. The Emergency Response Team provided tips in their email (put fresh batteries in flashlights, charge all electronics...) while the wind whistled through dorm windows. But how can one prepare for the next storm thrown at Conn? "One can never plan for every storm Mother Nature throws at us, but we can try our best to be prepared, ensure the safety of our students, and in the unlikely event of a storm, ensure that the campus is back up and running as soon as possible," said Madonna.

Connecticut College has a comprehensive emergency team that warns its students, which begs the question – do other colleges?

Wesleyan University, just 45 minutes from New London, has an emergency notification system called "BlackBoard Connect" and a Campus Community Emergency Response Team, similar to Connecticut College's. The University Of Massachusetts Amherst also has a campus EMS agency made up of students trained as Emergency Medical Technicians. Our college's EMS club also offers an EMT-Basic Training course each semester that students can take for one academic credit.

By protecting the campus from everything involving natural disasters to sports injuries, these services ensure our comfort here at Connecticut College. These students and staff learn how to save a life, and stay brave even in the face of the storm. •

Protecting Soil in the Arbo

ISABELLE SMITH
CONTRIBUTOR

The Arboretum is one of the primary elements that sets Connecticut College apart from its NESCAC (New England Small College Athletic Conference) competitors. Its beautiful 770 acres is divided into three different categories: plant collections, managed areas, and conservation plots. By dividing the land, the Arboretum can benefit many causes. The plant collections are display pieces for the purpose of beauty and exposing the diversity of the plant kingdom in a given region (Eastern United States). The managed areas are primarily for research: professors and students can test different controlling methods, like burning or pesticides. The conservation areas are for observing how different species move in and out of a plot of land. There are some ongoing studies that have tracked the development of different species – primarily trees and birds – for fifty years. These are essential studies for better understanding the ecosystems around us.

The Arboretum is a gift open to the public and to the Connecticut College community. With privilege comes responsibility. There are few rules in the Arboretum, but the existing ones are important to follow. The primary rule is to run or bike in specific areas of the Arboretum. There are signs posted at the entrance to all the plant collections and conservation areas that indicate that they are restricted for running; this includes the Native Plant Collections and Mamacoke Island. Only one managed area is free to heavy traffic of jogging: below Route 32 and above the railroad tracks. This rule banning speedy movement may seem arbitrarily applied, but it is essential for soil and plant health.

Despite sign postings of rules, Groundsperson Kraig Clark, says, “I’ve seen the trails get deeper and wider in the time I’ve been here.” He has worked on the Arboretum crew for three years. Leigh Knuttle, Horticulturist, explains, “There is sensitive vegetation along the side of the trails.” When individuals pound their feet, or bike tires, onto the

path below, they are compressing the soil.

Soil, where plants sink their roots, is composed of inorganic minerals (generally from broken down rocks into various sizes), organic matter (like fallen leaves), air, and water. Each particle of organic or inorganic matter is surrounded first by water then by air. In a dry season, the air cushion will be greater, and similarly, in a wet season, the surrounding water will be greater. Each plant’s roots are weaved in

The pounding of runners and bikers is negatively impacting the plants’ health, causing them to die.

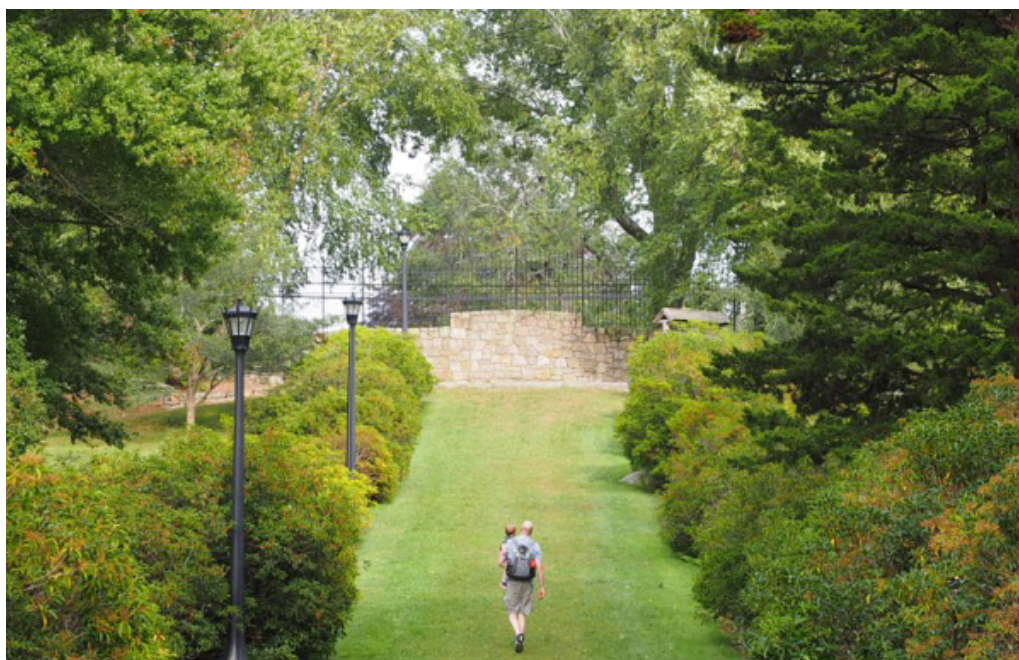
the airspace between these clumpy particles of matter and water. Essential minerals transfer from the particles to the roots. When the soil is compressed, the particles are pounded together and the air space becomes limited. The roots have less space into which they can grow, and consequently, access fewer water and minerals.

Another issue with soil compaction is surface damage. When the soil is compressed, a chain of events occurs. Because the air pockets have been pressed out of the soil, there is nowhere for rain to be absorbed. As a result, it “runs across the surfaces, limiting the amount of water to the plants’ roots below,” Knuttle related. While rushing across the surface,

the water picks up all sorts of loose items, and washes it all downhill. Depending on the amount of water, the erosion can be drastic. Having picked up all loose soil, roots that previously existed underground become exposed to foot traffic. The roots are stepped on and damaged. So now, the water-deprived roots have less functioning tissue in which they can transport water and integrated mineral nutrients to the growing part of the plant. With less essential ingredients, the plant becomes more susceptible to insects and pathogens. It is an avoidable downward spiral.

The Arboretum staff actively tries to maintain the beauty of the Arboretum, and with this comes the task of mitigating soil compaction. Brian Goulet, Senior Groundsperson, listed ways this is done: “Layering of mulch on paths, adding switchbacks on hill trails, and placing log bar ways” are steps to increase traction.

As much damage as they prevent, the grounds crew still struggles with the impact of heavy foot traffic. The pounding of runners and bikers is negatively impacting the plants’ health, causing them to die. Some of Goulet’s frustration stems from the lack of understanding of the intention of the place; an arboretum is a collection of trees, like a living museum. It is not a park. This resource is open for people to enjoy. It is “supposed to be for reflection and research.” Knuttle concludes, “Be aware – there are sensitive plants and research that has been going on for 50 years. A lot can be undone because of too much compaction.” •



Photos courtesy of Sophie Angele-Kuehl

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Questions of Equity and Inclusion: Voice Profiles New DIEI

APARNA GOPALAN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

To the College's fast growing collection of administrative positions, there has been a high profile and long-awaited addition: the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion (DIEI). Our first permanent DIEI, John McKnight, joined us this July from Lafayette College, where he served as the Dean of Intercultural Development.

"People have been really excited about the position, to have someone permanent in higher admin doing this work," McKnight told *The College Voice* in an interview in late August. Much is expected from McKnight's position, which has been the center of heated debates, discussions, and demands for at least the past two years, if not the past few decades. The position was newly articulated in the search that began in February 2015, and has gone through more than its fair share of trouble. The search, having been paused due to popular protest in spring 2015, restarted in June 2015 and failed twice in the early months of 2016, finally went through a third pool of campus visits to select the DIEI, over a year after the search first began and two years after the College's previous senior diversity officer left. In the meantime, the position, first held by a team of interims cobbled together hastily by the president following popular protest and demands, was held by an interim dean who was asked to stay on the job for a full semester more than he had initially signed up for. The interim DIEI's term finally ended with an occupation of his office and the Office of the President in spring 2016 by a large group of student protestors.

In spring 2015, the DIEI was hoped to bring "Inclusive Excellence" to Conn. By the time all the iterations of the search have unfolded, "inclusive excellence" has given way to "equity, inclusion, and full participation," in recognition of the fact that Conn has too much to do before aiming for inclusive excellence. The job is now in the hands of McKnight.

"In America, diversity is big business," opens McKnight's PhD dissertation, a critical insight of the sort that one would not necessarily expect from someone in the business. This is one of the things that distinguishes McKnight from other administrators: he is able to still name the problems of higher education while being inside it. This is one of the main things he brought up as a challenge of his job: "How do you critique an institution while existing within it and trying to make the best of it, trying to make sure people have the opportunity to feel at home?" For McKnight, the challenge is to be a critic and caretaker at the same time, to challenge the privilege that can be "really baked into these institutions" and call it out, while also building a sense of community for the people currently at the institution.

His previous position, Dean of Intercultural Development, focused his energies on the student experience, programming, and advocacy, while the DIEI position charges McKnight with thinking about equity at the institu-

tion as a whole, a task that requires him to work with faculty, staff, and students. He maintains that creating a dialogue with all members of the college is crucial to changing the campus climate. When asked what work his office has already started doing over the summer to achieve this goal, McKnight mentioned that training for staff and various administrative offices that has taken place to ensure that everyone has

"Policies and procedures need to be there for us to fall back on," he said, "but I want to move away from using the bias policy; for me things have gone awry if we are using it as often."

developed language to talk about equity and inclusion and understand how their work on campus relates to the work of the DIEI office.

His office has also been working on strengthening policies and procedures; for example, finalizing the bias protocol policy for students, which was included in the student handbook this fall. McKnight's approach towards policies like bias protocol is that they are a pragmatic necessity but not the main way to do diversity work. "Policies and procedures need to be there for us to fall back on," he said, "but I want to move away from using the bias policy; for me things have gone awry if we are using it as often. I like to be more proactive in my approach." The protocol is also too narrow in scope to serve as the primary site of change. McKnight explained: "I would like to get us out of that space where everything is reported as bias. Some things may not rise to that threshold. It might be terrible, offensive, hurtful, rude, unprofessional, but 'bias' actually does come from a legal definition of what it means to target someone based on their membership in a Protected Category, and if it falls short of that, it doesn't mean we are not going to be interested in addressing it, we will, but the bias protocol is not always the place for it."

"I want people to understand that this is part of my job. If you are choosing to protest the administration, this is one of the places, historically, and around the country, that tires to align itself with the mission and objectives of most social movements on campus. If this office is being held up as an example of the oppressor, then we are all in trouble."

But besides mentioning his interest in getting to know people on campus on a personal basis, McKnight was less clear on the strategy of the DIEI office for addressing incidents that do not constitute legal bias but violate an expected professionalism or code of conduct. Instead, he shifted the conversation from the reports themselves to the climate that produces them. "Students who carry identities that are or that they experience as marginalized tend to have the loudest voices around certain issues. I understand it; I was one of those. But I

want to hear from the huge silent middle of students who may be underinformed, not thinking about these issues. I worry about those students who are having their college experience influenced by students on either end. I would like my office to spend less time on the groups on the extremes of each issue, and more time inviting silent middle into conversation." He established clearly his interest not in responding to incidents but in creating robust engagement with controversial issues, an approach that is sure to be a good fit to Conn, where the majority of the student body abstains from conversations about difference and power. At the same time, though, McKnight's answer leaves me wondering what exactly the DIEI office will do

to address the day to day problems of marginalized members of the community that do not qualify as legal bias.

One of the ways that McKnight's office could reach the "silent middle" as well as the extreme ends of various issues would be through the curriculum. When I brought up the question of the curriculum, McKnight expressed excitement about Connections but clarified that "this is not me jumping on board and drinking the kool-aid," saying that how Connections manifests will have to be closely monitored by his office along with the DoF and others to make sure that course offerings are diversified and address issues of equity and inclusion. McKnight was optimistic about what he had seen with regards to faculty taking initiative under Connections to develop such critical coursework. "We might not see some provocative new course titles for a year or two as they are letting ideas germinate," McKnight stressed. "We should give it a chance and see how creative and adaptive faculty will be in terms of what they will offer." It remains to be seen how much say the DIEI office will have over curricular offerings if in a few years, they do not meet McKnight's hopes.

Even though the DIEI is cast as an institution-wide position, the main initiatives of the DIEI seem to target staff and students. This is not surprising since faculty are typically exempt from much management by the College outside of the Dean of Faculty's office and their own elected bodies such as FSCC. This would explain why a major demand with regards to the bias protocol, that it address faculty/student biases as well as student/student ones, has been left unfulfilled. It also explains why the success of Connections at educating students about power

and difference ultimately depends on faculty initiative instead of any mandates coming from the DIEI's office. When asked about these thorny issues of faculty autonomy, McKnight largely acquiesced that his job was not to manage faculty but made it clear that this would not mean that he would not make his thoughts heard if faculty members undermined the efforts of his office in building a united community (although he thinks this is unlikely to happen). "Just because I say it doesn't mean you have to do anything different," he clar-

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

ified, “but I am not going to not say it.”

Finally, our conversation turned to the events of May 2016, when a group of students occupied the office of the interim DIEI at the time, David Canton, for the final week of the spring semester. When asked if he knew the circumstances of the occupation, McKnight expressed reservations. He said that there was much for him to understand about the circumstances of the occupation, including why it was that the DIEI office was chosen as the site to protest. “I want people to understand that this is part of my job. If you are choosing to protest the administration, this is one of the places, historically, and around the country, that tries to align itself with the mission and objectives of most social movements on campus. If this office is being held up as an example of the oppressor, then we are all in trouble.” And he added: “There’s no reason to think it is over.”

McKnight expressed interest in speaking to the students involved in the occupation in order to work with them. “I have a seat at the right table, being a senior admin,” he said. “I have an opportunity to be reflective of peoples concerns, if I know what the concerns are, and if they are reflective of the two goals I mentioned before: to move the institution forward in positive ways and to build community.”

The tricky balance of the DIEI’s position – as both a member of Conn’s senior administration and as someone who was hired to challenge the administration and the College, as both critic and caretaker of the power dynamics in place – was apparent in this discussion. Even as he emphasized that his office was a product of student activism over many decades, and was supposed to be representative of voices of marginalized people on campus, he also said that it was “hard for [him] not to be in solidarity with” the interim DIEI and his team in the context of the occupation, since they are people that meant well. Even as he called being a senior administrator and having access to closed-door conversations “his form of protest,” he still emphasized that students cannot fully know the vantage point of those who run institutions like Conn when they protest these institutions. He brought up how, when he was an undergraduate at the University of Florida, he went on the record saying: “the entire University of Florida is racist.” If he could talk to his 19-year-old self now, he would say

“Yes, you are right to feel what you feel, yes you’ve experienced racism, felt like you’ve had to represent your race, felt underprivileged, and no, the school wasn’t designed for you, they didn’t have you in mind.” Looking back at his thoughts then, he now thinks that “of course the University of Florida is racist, every institution is racist, we live in a racialized society where everything was founded on racism,” but at the same time says that experience has helped him understand how institutions work better than he did when he made that critique as a young activist. This leaves us wondering how exactly McKnight will understand students at Conn who critique the institution and its workings – are they justified in their feelings and deserving of the change they are demanding, or should they try to “lift up from their vantage point” and realize that the institution’s workings

are too complex to aim simplistic critiques at it? There is some delicate balance between these viewpoints that McKnight aims to achieve. It remains to be seen whether he will be able to establish that balance here at Conn.

If his background is any indication, McKnight has never shied away from a challenge such as this one. This is evident, for example, from the subject of his dissertation, which is titled “Brothers in the Struggle: A Phenomenological Study of White Male College Student Development as Social Justice Allies.” As the title suggests, McKnight was interested in exploring the formation of white male allies. His dissertation focused on the transformative capacities in the most difficult constituencies when it comes to racial justice work, an interest which very much mirrors his interest in doing diversity work at pre-dominantly white, small liberal arts colleges.”I

sometimes think I am a glutton for punishment,” McKnight jokingly said, agreeing with this assessment. “It [at small liberal arts colleges] is a very challenging environment. Colleges like Lafayette and Conn have a longstanding history of being very exclusive in their policies and practices. The challenge for all of us is to move these institutions forward and bring about systemic changes that will enable individuals to relate better on the interpersonal level.” Given the vexed history of this work at these institutions in general and Conn in particular, many will be keenly watching to see how McKnight’s office and division take on this challenge in the time to come. •



Environmental Voter Project Will Transform the Electorate

ALLIE GIROUARD
CONTRIBUTOR

This summer I had the pleasure and privilege of interning at the Environmental Voter Project (EVP). It's an organization that's not even a year old-- just two full-time employees and some interns sitting in the corner of an office in Boston, trying to save the world. At first glance, EVP doesn't seem like the leader of a revolution. Running around the city and talking to apathetic people during the hottest months on record doesn't exactly feel like the lord's work. But EVP is taking an innovative approach to environmental action; it isn't trying to convince anyone that the environment matters.

EVP is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing voter turnout. Its mission is based on the following question--one that environmentalists ask themselves every day: in the year 2016, why do we still lack the political will to pass urgently needed environmental legislation? Well, the answer is depressingly simple--politicians listen to people who vote, and voters consistently rank environmental issues among their lowest priorities in every election.

But just because voters rank environmental issues among their lowest priorities doesn't mean nobody in the country cares about climate change. There are actually plenty of Americans who are deeply concerned about environmental issues; those people are

just less likely to vote than their fellow citizens. Using data analytics, EVP has identified 15.78 million individual environmentalists who do not vote consistently. Over 5 million of these environmentalists aren't even registered to vote. These people may not be the environmentalists you're picturing in your head. They don't all hug trees and sing kumbaya. But they care deeply about environmental issues, a fact that would be reflected in political action-- if they actually voted.

These 15.78 million inconsistent environmental voters present both a problem and an opportunity. It turns out that we may not actually need to persuade people to care more about the environment. That's good news. As I'm sure you know if you've ever had a political conversation with anyone ever, it's really hard (and expensive and time consuming) to change people's minds. The future of the environmental movement may be as simple as getting more of our existing environmentalists to vote. In the era of big data, that task isn't as daunting as it seems. Sophisticated political campaigns now have the tools to: (1) identify individuals according to the issues they prioritize and then (2) dramatically increase their likelihood of voting. These tools give EVP the ability to get millions of silent environmentalists to vote.

Using cutting-edge behavioral science that is proven to dramati-

cally increase voter turnout, EVP makes use of canvassers, phone bankers, mailings, and digital campaigns mobilize identified environmentalists amid upcoming elections. Although EVP has been around for only a short time, it's efforts have already produced results. EVP, conducting its own self-analysis, scored an 89% accuracy rating for its ability to identify non-voting environmentalists. Its mobilization efforts are increasing turnout among non-voting environmentalists by a striking 5.1%, a number with huge potential to transform the electorate. If scaled to the national level, even for just one election, these results would translate into an additional 804,751 new voters. This increase in voter turnout would change not only the results of individual elections, but could transform the electorate and the ways politicians are forced to view it.

As I've mentioned, politicians still, despite the real and perceived dysfunction in the political process, must listen to voters. Even taking into account all the power that big money yields, voters ultimately decide whether politicians keep their job and whether a political party stays in power. Even if certain politicians care deeply about the environment, they aren't going to spend their political capital on an issue that voters haven't prioritized.

Politicians are also going to define "voters" rather narrowly. They aren't going to waste time and money trying to figure out what matters to people who probably won't vote or who haven't even registered to vote. They're going to spend time and money figuring out what matters to likely voters. And political campaigns know exactly who those likely voters are. Although who you vote for is private information, whether or not you vote is a matter of public record.

You can look up your voting history. I can look up your voting history. Your sister's friend's aunt's dog walker can look up your voting history. And so can your elected officials. Political

campaigns have access to databases that collect the voting history of every registered voter in America. Because technology is amazing and scary, campaigns can sort and re-sort all that data, make lists and groups, and score Americans according to their likelihood of going to the polls. If you care about getting your voice heard, you better hope that you have a high score. Since political campaigns are running on limited time and limited money, they don't care about your opinions if there's only a small chance you're actually going to show up on election day.

And that's the real beauty about what EVP is doing. Other political organizations seek to influence the passage of environmental legislation by working to elect specific candidates. They are doing necessary but short-term work. The Environmental Voter Project, by contrast, is talking to and turning out people that no other political organization cares about. Once these new, environmentally conscious voters turn up at the ballot box, they appear as "voters" in the public voter file, and dozens of well-funded campaigns will begin to target them. The voice of these voters, the environmentalists, begins to matter. EVP is taking the long-term, electorate-transforming strategy that might just save the planet.

So what's the most important thing you can do to help combat climate change? It turns out the answer is simple -- vote. Don't just vote in November (although definitely vote in November) or in a few other major elections. Vote all the time. Vote for your Senators, your governor, your attorney general, your state representatives. Become a consistent voter--a voter that no politician can ignore. Make your voice heard in every election.

For more information about the Environmental Voter Project or to pledge to be a consistent voter and receive election reminders, head to environmentalvoter.org. (Please do it. We're going to want a planet to live on when we're old and and gray.) •

Reflections on Occupy Fanning

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

said, campus-wide, about tone and culture. There may be issues on campus which become so pervasive...that it requires someone to open up the dialogue and say, "We're aware of this as an administration"; we want people to know--our stakeholders who watch the emails outside of

campus and the ones who are here, a part of the institution--that this is not being swept under the table."

When asked about the administration's response to specific concerns about institutional support for interdisciplinary programs, and the future in store for Africana Studies after the expiration of its 2-year funding

project, McNeely Cobham expressed confidence in the ability of David Canton, now Director of the Africana Studies Program, to anchor the program. "His knowledge [as a former administrator], as well as the relationships he has been able to establish with the President and others," she said, "will help him and other faculty in Africana Studies to be in conversation about a model for sustainable funding

and support for that program...He has the ability to negotiate and work in partnership with other offices to strengthen the program through financial resources and student involvement." •



Connections Brings 21st Century Learning to Conn

SAADYA CHEVAN
CONTRIBUTOR

After years of trials and tribulations, the college has begun the process of implementing its new Connections curriculum. The curriculum, phased to impact the classes of 2020 and beyond, will bring about changes in student and faculty experiences here at Conn for years to come. Some changes will be visible to the community, and others will go unnoticed, but all will have a profound impact on the college. While some suggest that Connections will emphasize the teaching of vocational skills at the expense of a well-rounded liberal arts education, I look forward to seeing these changes implemented. By demanding that future students create independent projects and by emphasizing the intersectionality of different majors, Connections encourages students to adopt a broad outlook of the world.

As a high school senior, I felt unsure about whether I would be prepared to create quality work without the structure of classroom instruction. I noticed that Conn, unlike other schools, did not formally require students to complete any sort of independent work, thesis, or capstone project to graduate. One year of experience at Conn has taught me that asking students to do the rigorous independent work is a good thing. Students should be able to express how what they've done in college affects their worldview in their senior year.

Once fully implemented, Connections will require students to complete a "senior reflection" which they will present to the college community. While one could argue that this mandated reflection represents a move by the college to plaster "marketable skills" on its students, the act of presenting to one's peers has an important academic value: we impart knowledge and ideas through presenting. Why should we avoid adopting curricular reforms that have academic value just because they also happen to be marketable? Whether students' interests lie in the academy or the world beyond it, they should have the experience of putting together a serious presentation for their peers that reflects their own interests.

Another critique that has been leveled at Connections is that it will give more resources and funding to departments at the college, such as economics and international relations, that seem to give students a ready pathway toward employment after graduation. A curriculum focused on expanding employment opportunities, opponents of Connections argue, seems to align the college with the ideology of monopoly capitalism. Writing in *The College Voice* last spring, Zachary LaRock '16, claimed that Connections might undermine voices that "view the university as a medium through which to leverage critiques of such institutions as neo-liberal capitalism, government corruption and other similar societal ills."

It is true that the college is starting to run more classes that are vocationally oriented, such as accounting, but those classes are also what students want. Accounting is above its cap this semester, which is the first semester it is being offered. While I certainly believe that views in opposition to our society's way of doing things have a place in academia, I also believe that academia must be a place for the exchange of and exposure to a broad spectrum of ideas and concepts whether loved or hated. As an example, one should have the ability to take a stance on the merits and ills of monopoly capitalism and defend the reasons for those beliefs.

I believe that education should not force a person to adopt one set of viewpoints over another, but rather expose him or her to a breadth of knowledge and ideas. In the end, I think that students will come to their own "right" conclusions about how to lead their lives. Exposing students to a wide range of knowledge, Connections enables each student to come to conclusions independently. Presenting their work and ideas to the school prior to their graduation, seniors give younger students an understanding of the learning process. Ultimately, the mission of the college should revolve around one word and all the trouble and enlightenment that it entails: education.

The methods Connections uses to revamp general education and introductory courses have also been questioned. The new modes of inquiry have been criticized for reducing the number of humanities courses students are required to take. The new Social and Historical inquiry requirement, for example, initially seemed to lump together the social sciences, philosophy & religion, and history, the old areas 3, 6, & 7 respectively. The college later resolved this problem by listing some courses, especially in the philosophy and religion departments, in multiple areas.

Problems have arisen and will continue to arise as Connections moves forward in its implementation, but these issues will be resolved in time. The modes of inquiry are an imperfect system, but they are only meant to exist independently of pathways for about two years. Plenty of schools do not even use a system as comprehensive as our old seven areas requirement. Wesleyan University, one of our peer institutions, has students complete three courses each in three areas, and Trinity College uses a "five fields" system similar to our new one. I think that Conn's new system removes the rigidity that results when the college assigns each department to a general education area. For example, linguistics courses, which were listed under social studies, are now defined more broadly under the new area 2, quantitative and formal reasoning.

ConnCourses, the end product of the college's push to develop new and revamped introductory courses that are more engaging, have also faced criticism. As LaRock writes: "Although new Conn-

Courses claim to foster...inquiry across disciplines, their effective implementation would require most faculty members to have training in fields beyond those in which they conduct their research. Interdisciplinarity could merely be a code word to hide the fact that ConnCourses are really just broad, general and watered down surveys of material with which students become vaguely familiar, but never fully master or critically engage."

I think that LaRock's suggestion that ConnCourses are more watered down than the old introductory courses is correct, but I don't see this development as a bad thing. College professors have always been hard pressed to cram the right amount of material into a fifteen week course period. I also can't see how faculty would be able to teach effectively without teaching material unrelated to their research areas. When I compare a professor's syllabus to his or her biography I usually see plenty of material that seems unrelated to the professor's research.

Plenty of students take introductory courses out of pure interest rather than as a gateway to upper-level study in a field, and others looking to major in a subject may feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the disciplinary concepts and conventions with which they immediately come face-to-face. Revamped introductory courses should try to work from where students are rather than where they need to be at the end of the course, getting them from point A to point B instead of just teaching point B.

The push to make ConnCourses interdisciplinary also has benefits since students will have the opportunity to express concepts in ways familiar to them rather than according to the conventions of a discipline that they are struggling to learn. Increasingly I have wondered why it is necessary for disciplines to be separated from each other, especially since many of these distinctions did not come into existence until the late nineteenth century. Why should we fight now to keep fields separated when for most of the time since Plato founded his academy such barriers did not exist? If a book like *The Communist Manifesto* is a perfectly appropriate text for an anthropology, economics, government, philosophy, or sociology course, would completely different issues come up if I took all five of those classes? There would be some similarities in the perspectives each discipline takes on the book. Professors who teach and grade interdisciplinary courses and work should gain a heightened awareness of what their colleagues in other departments are doing, which will in turn affect their own research and work for the College. •

“Poor turnout plagues EPC General ED open meetings”

Small turnout debate merits of proposal for mandatory Human Difference and Diversity requirement in General Education

Editor's Note: The piece above was published in the March 1st, 1994 publication of The College Voice. While the majority of the March issue is dominated by a peculiar series of stories discussing a campus arsonist, the piece appears as a feature article near the back of the issue. Written by contributing writer Jennifer LeVan, the article details the controversies surrounding the creation of a possible new general education curriculum and the potential addition of a “diversity and human differences” course requirement.

JENNIFER LEVAN
ALUMNA

Despite poor student and faculty turnout the second subcommittee of the Educational Planning Committee, focused on the creation of a human difference and diversity requirement in the curriculum, held a series of open meetings last week to garner input from the community on the proposed human difference and diversity requirement.

A handful of students and faculty members discussed goals and options for human difference and diversity which will eventually be ratified by the faculty, according to Thomas Ammirati, EPC member and associate professor of physics. Ammirati attributed the small turn-out to weather conditions and confusions created by the fire in the College Center.

“We will be presenting to the faculty at the faculty meeting next week a draft report on what we’ve done so far,” Ammirati said.

Ammirati said a list of goals and options for the difference and diversity requirement was sent to the faculty last week, and attributed the meetings’ poor attendance to adverse weather conditions.

Camille Hanlon, EPC member and professor of child development said the proposed human difference and diversity requirement is an expansion of the previously proposed multicultural requirement. Disabilities and gender issues would also be topics within the expanded requirement, Hanlon said.

Several faculty members debated the problem of setting goals for the teaching of difference and diversity within the curriculum.

Walter Brady, associate professor of mathematics said the views of difference and other cultures in a required course should not steer the student’s emotional and moral perception of that culture towards that which the college community deems appropriate and representative of their goals.

“I maintain that when we think about the curriculum, when we think about the purpose of the college, a lot of people have different views on its purpose and goals. I think a lot of people think one of the goals of the college is promoting diversity. The only goals it should have are intellectual goals, not moral, ethical or political goals,” Brady said.

In response to Brady’s argument, Ammirati cited the fact that many institutions are now requiring diversity requirements, such as Temple University’s Racism 101.

However, Ammirati also questioned the inculcation of certain values into the curriculum.

“What do you do with the perceptions on the part of some [people]...how do we put perceptions into the curriculum without pushing certain values?”

Ammirati said.

Offering a theoretical solution, Brady said, “We must separate the intellectual from the ethical attitude. The only attitude you are trying to change in a course is an intellectual attitude.”

Stating that sometimes ethical attitudes are changed automatically, Brady found the difference and diversity issue analogous to the Connecticut College honor code. “I don’t see the purpose of the honor code to teach people to be honest, it just may do that involuntarily, as these courses may [change ethical and moral attitude involuntarily.]”

Other faculty members viewed the difference and diversity requirement not as influence beliefs, but better preparing students to make informed ethical choices.

Hanlon said, “There is a line of distinction about what the liberal arts do... [O]ne is that a liberal arts education makes a person a moral person in a liberal sense...[T]he second is that it gives students the information and skills they need to imagine and achieve things, in other words, to enhance their range of choices.”

Connie Dowell, EPC member and college librarian, referred to world religious studies as an applicable parallel. “The diversity requirement might be the same thing...we don’t teach students to be religious.”

Judith Kirmmse, executive assistant to the president, and affirmative action officer, said as students analyze and gain abstract views of other cultures, in turn they might view and accept human beings from a more holistic point of view. “The world may be moving in a more holistic direction,” Kirmmse said.

On the other hand, Brady said, “It would be a tragedy if the direction of humanity is to muddle all these aspects together again.”

Theresa Ammirati, director of the writing center, stressed the distinction between learning and promulgating information.

“It seems to me we have to give students the rhetorical skills to choose between two agendas, bad or good, we just have to hope that once they’ve been exposed, they’ll choose the agenda for good,” Ammirati said.

She continued, however, “I really am wearing of those who preach values in the curriculum. On the one hand one has to be very careful about teaching values, on the other hand, one has to be wary of teaching a disembodied intellectualism.”

Most faculty members agreed that the focus of the human diversity and difference requirement should be contemporary issues.

In two weeks, the subcommittee will hold more open meetings dealing with the science and math issue, and the skills portion of the curriculum. •

Commentary on 1994’s “Poor turnout”

APARNA GOPALAN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SARAH ROSE GRUSZECKI
MANAGING EDITOR

It’s quite remarkable to note that over 20 years later, our curriculum still lacks any “diversity” requirement, especially when one considers how many times such a requirement has been demanded and come up in conversations around the curriculum. While Connections requires a first year seminar, two semesters of language, and several ambiguous “modes of inquiry,” there is no requirement for students to explicitly study power, oppression, racism etc. Although many of the already established “pathways” do provide courses that engage with these issues through a variety of disciplinary lenses, students are ultimately able to choose which issues they wish to engage with, and faculty are able to choose which issues should even be on the table for engagement. Despite national and local demands for a curriculum that emphasizes the study of power and difference for all, the College has consistently refused to necessitate this sort of critical learning as a required part of the Connecticut College education.

In the article above, former Professor of Mathematics Walter Brady stated, “I think a lot of people think one of the goals of the College is

promoting diversity. The only goals it should have are intellectual goals, not moral, ethical or political goals.” Such a statement assumes that “diversity” constitutes a moral, ethical, and political sort of learning, but whitewashed curricula do not have any morals, ethics, or politics to them, and are simply “neutral,” “normal,” and “intellectual.” “Diversity” and the pursuit of social justice issues more broadly are in themselves deeply intellectual goals. Teaching is an inherently political act, and an education is a politicizing undertaking; although educators should incorporate multiple perspectives and viewpoints within their teaching, educators still decide what issues are even to be debated, which perspectives are to be included in a short semester, and which voices are to be concealed.

One could argue that we have come a long way from where we were as a college in 1995. While this may be true in some ways, there is a remarkable continuity between our new “revolutionary” curriculum, Connections, and the old curriculum that assumed that “diversity” was a non-intellectual, moral/ethical/political agenda.

Under Connections, even though students are supposed to develop “integrated” thematic inquiry, no “themes” are privileged or marked as more important than other themes and there is no clear definition of “theme” to begin with. Under this scheme, “Entrepreneurship” is just as crucial of a “theme” for Conn students to study as “City Schools,” and students may pick whichever one sounds more important to them. So, if not developing important social competencies across the board, what is Connections really doing? If we look closely, we see that the main thing Connections equips students with is a set of apolitical but (we assume) “intellectual” skills that may then be applied in any nameable occupational context.

We hope to continue to excavate the archives, thinking about how exactly the demand for the diversity requirement has been silenced in the history of the College, how many times, and under what justifications, as we bear witness to Connections unfolding. •



Connecticut
College
Arboretum

For more information or to register for programs, visit our website arboretum.conncoll.edu email arbor@conncoll.edu or call 860-439-6020

The Art & Science of Preserving Plant Specimens
Wednesday, Sept 21, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Meet in New London Hall, Botany lab room 112
Free Conn students, \$10 members, \$20 adults

Fall Bird Walk
Saturday, Sept 24, 7 to 8:30 a.m.
Meet at Arboretum entrance on Williams Street
Free, space is limited to 20 people, please register

Native Plant Collection Tour
Saturday, October 1, 10 a.m.
Free, meet at the blue sculpture near New London Hall

Campus Landscapes Tour
Saturday, October 1, 10 a.m.
Free, meet at the blue sculpture near New London Hall

Mammal Mystery Revealed
Saturday, October 1, 2 to 5 p.m.
Meet at the east end of Blenheim Ave. near the railroad
Free students and members, \$10 public





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Questions?

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Liz de Lise and Olive Tiger Kick Off SAC's Friday Night Live Series

CHLOE FORD
CONTRIBUTOR

Students and community members slowly trickled into Coffee Grounds last Thursday night to hear the music of Olive Tiger and Liz de Lise.

The shop was filled not only with a warmth that pushed its way in from the humid September evening, but a more figurative warmth that emanated from the many people perched on tables and couches around the room.

The lights were dim, the coffee plentiful, and the whole room was washed in a subtle softness.

When Olive Tiger, a musician based in greater New Haven and Brooklyn, picked up her guitar, a hush fell over the space. She spoke a quiet greeting into the microphone.

"It's so nice to be here with my instru-

ments, in this place, with these people."

And then she began. She played a gentle tune, her fingers moving expertly over the strings, her voice swinging up to reach pitches and then tunneling its way down to the lower notes. The song rose in intensity, crested, then fell back again into an unmatched tenderness. The silence after her final note quickly melted into loud applause.

About halfway through her set, Olive traded in a guitar for a cello and began to experiment with pedals, developing a loop underneath the melody. She created a pulse, a river that flowed beneath her voice and carried it in all directions. The audience was mesmerized—many people stood with their eyes closed while others used the open space to dance, exploring the music through movement.

Olive Tiger's set ended with enthusiastic applause, and Liz de Lise, a Conn alum now based in Philly, moved to the front of the room. She introduced herself and then jumped quickly into the music, her voice a

perfect mixture of tough and sweet, her songs gentle and biting at once.

Liz's creations were nothing if not powerful. The instruments shook the room, filling what was empty, and the audience could not help but sway, snap, and smile at one another. There was a sense of everything and everyone coming together—grasping this art for a moment and then passing it on. One of Liz's last songs was "God Only Knows" by the Beach Boys, a song about love and gratitude, fit for the occasion.

Both artists have recently released new music. Olive Tiger's latest album, "Until My Body Breaks," was released on August 19th, and Liz de Lise's new album, "Liz de Lise," came out on September 9th. These albums are beautiful, moving, and more than worth a listen.

This wonderful show kicked off the Friday Night Live series that will be taking place at Conn this semester. Every Friday, a space on campus will be filled with song, dance, food, and good company. •



lizedise.bandcamp.com

First-Year 5: The End-All-Be-All List of 5 Embarrassing First-Year Moments

AMIANSU KHANAL
CONTRIBUTOR

Oh, the excitement. Oh, the nerves. Oh, everything else in between. That is how I felt before coming to Conn. I wondered how living on my own for the first time in my entire life would feel, and I guess a lot of first-years were feeling the same way. As soon as I entered the campus I thought to myself, "Wow... this is actually really beautiful, I cannot wait to live here for the next four years."

I moved in and everything was merry until I realized what life without A/C felt like. Eventually, I got through orientation and started building my list of embarrassing first-year moments. Below is a list of things that I have managed to do within the first two weeks of school:

1) Walking into a class an hour and 15 minutes early: Yes, this actually happened to me in the second week of classes. I thought my History class (Contesting India's Past) with Professor Chhabria started at 1:15 when actually it started at 2:45. I entered a class filled with seniors while the professor was giving a serious lecture. She looked really confused and thought she had gone over time and then eventually realized that it was only 1:15. She said, "We do not have class until 2:45." I apologized and left the room, but it was a very embarrassing 30 seconds.

2) Falling off of my chair in Math class: This was a very interesting experience. For context, I am currently taking a Calculus class, we had just taken

a quiz on limits, and Professor O'Keefe was solving a problem in the board. I leaned over because I had dropped my pencil, and while I was leaning to the side, my chair tilted with me and I fell onto the floor in slow motion.

3) Putting my clothes in the dryer instead of the washer: Yes, I have done this as well. I was doing laundry for the first time at Conn, and I thought the dryer was the washer. I put in my quarters and then my clothes, as well as the Tide Pods, and hit start. After I hit start, I realized what I had done. I simply moved the clothes into the washer and wasted a dollar and fifty cents.

4) Running into a glass door: While I was walking into the library, I didn't realize that the doors were glass. They looked transparent, so I ran right into one and hit my head. Next time you're walking somewhere, how sure can you be what's in front of you is not a glass door?

5) Trying to open my box in the mailroom for 30 minutes: This is something for which I refuse to take the blame. The P.O. boxes in the mailroom are harder to open than a bank vault!

This list is an embarrassing one, but moments like these make you realize that it is okay to make silly mistakes. More importantly, it's okay to be able to laugh at yourself, once in awhile. We so often get caught up in being very critical of our actions all the time that laughing at our mistakes every so often is entertaining. It teaches humility and to not take oneself too seriously—at least not all the time. •

Ode to the Rebel Survivor

CHRISTINA VILLALOBOS
CONTRIBUTOR

What resides and grows within
Has no guide
no blueprint
to reach the acme of my happiness
translated justice
transient is this sentiment
like the negligible grains itinerant
passengers of the sea
Gallivant is my heart
(A chamber) springing
restless
hearts tracing our existence
pulsating..
remembering
historical residues
rippled that through discernible whispers
remark
Seek the permanent
Anchor love
the waters are turbulent
mend the wounds that life has dented
harness the strength
that life has woven for you. •

Ramzi Kaiss: A True Renaissance Man

CRISTINA LYNCH
CONTRIBUTOR

We had the opportunity to sit down with Ramzi Kaiss '17, SGA President, and talk about his love for the arts, a passion of his that not many people know about. Growing up, Ramzi was surrounded by the arts in his home, which most likely sparked his ever-growing interest. Coming from Lebanon, where music, painting, literature, and theater are prevalent in the lives of citizens, Ramzi was exposed at a young age to traditional Middle Eastern art. As he got older, he became an

Syria, where 1 in every 4 people are refugees. I took a class my sophomore year about the history of refugees with Professor Borer, which largely sparked my interest in the topic. This past summer, I designed a workshop for refugee children, specifically young teenagers. This workshop was based on identity and what it means to be a Syrian and a refugee in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. It is hard for many of these children to live normal lives, so I worked with them to help them cope with their new lives. I interviewed them for my documentary, specifically beginning with ice break-



avid lover of theater, specifically.

Most recently, Ramzi created and produced a documentary about refugee children that had fled to the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. He worked with children ages 10 to 15, getting to know them through ice breaker activities before interviewing them about their lives as refugees. This documentary was an opportunity for Ramzi to combine his love for the arts with his deep interest in raising awareness for "marginalization and dehumanization of others...[which] is especially relevant today with the refugee crisis."

Here is what Ramzi had to say:

The College Voice: What was the impact of working with refugees on your worldview? Can you encapsulate the essence for us?

Ramzi Kaiss: I come from Lebanon which is a neighboring country of

ers so that we could become comfortable with one another. Hearing their stories was a very eye opening and a very real experience for me.

TCV: What were some of your childhood artistic and philosophical influences?

RK: When I was in eleventh grade, I read and fell in love with Plato and Socrates. I am a philosophy major and it continues to blow my mind. When I was young, I did a lot of acting at home. Actually, when I was forty days old, I was featured in a skin care commercial, thanks to my mother. But that is off topic... Spring of my freshmen year, I auditioned for a senior capstone project and ended up getting the lead—which is kind of a big deal for a freshman. From then on, I was in a play every semester. This acting experience has been awesome and I really loved working with the department here at Conn.

TCV: What kind of art surrounded you in your community and in your home? Is your family interested in the arts as well?

RK: I was always acting even from a young age, as I said before, with my brothers. One of my brothers is a playwright at Oberlin College, so we both enjoy it. My parents listened to Lebanese music every day in the house and I was always surrounded by traditional Lebanese cultures growing up. Also, my mother was an actress, so I would say she was a big inspiration for me.

TCV: What do you think is the importance of the connection between arts and education? What is your attitude towards the liberal arts education here at



Photos courtesy of Emma Schlichting



Conn?

RK: Performance makes things more interesting. I think that acting and performance are great mediums to discuss, understand, and teach things. I love the approaches of a liberal arts education. Personally, I am not a math or science student, but for my general education requirements, I was able to take a class in philosophy and film to satisfy those courses. I feel like the liberal arts helps you better understand the world, and I think it affects the way I will view things after my time at Conn.

TCV: In addition to your SGA presidency, what legacy do you want to leave here at Conn? Do you have

any advice for current or incoming students?

RK: My advice for anyone reading this is to take advantage of your resources and reach out in every way you can. Go to a conference, take a class, learn an instrument, play a sport, because it will change the way you see the school and other people as well. I hope to leave behind a strong student government foundation that will uphold the standards of shared governance. If you feel like there is something wrong, do not hesitate to change it. Make new traditions, but also respect those already in place. •



Artist Profile: Donglin Li



Photos courtesy of Halie Curmen

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

TCV: You recently completed a summer internship at a Buddhist monastery in upstate New York. When did your interest in Buddhism start?

DL: More than a year ago. Being Chinese, some buddhist teachings are so integrated in your life. Its always been part of my family and a part of me. It was when I went to London it really starting kicking in. A person I met in the studio did the final kick. He showed me around all the temples and centers in London. After study abroad, I came back to the States and started spiritual practice.

TCV: So, would you say that Buddhist teachings are evident throughout your work and that you are particularly sighting Buddhism?

DL: With my work, I don't want to bring Buddhism up, even subtly, because the truths that Buddhist teachings have revealed to us are really truths that they don't have to be Buddhist teachings to start with. These are just things that you know but you don't really think about it.

TCV: How has your work changed from when you first came to Conn? Do you have any favorite mediums to work with?

DL: Yes. immensely. When I found Buddhism, it was so rich and had so much to work with. I'm taking its teachings and morphing them into artistic expressions and showing them to people.

I painted primarily in sophomore and junior year. Right now I'm really branching out because I painted almost exclusively before. I'm doing sculpture, performances, installations. and some videos too. I don't want to constrain myself to one or two specific mediums. I enjoy them all, really. I did my first performance and it felt good. It definitely opened up a new window to my work.

TCV: A week ago you gave a performance in Cummings titled "What it takes to make you burst." During this performance art, you sat on a chair against a blank white backdrop and proceeded to blow up a red balloon to what seemed like its full capacity of air. When the balloon

seemed to get to the biggest it could be you then took a needle and popped it. What were you trying to convey with this performance art?

DL: The performance art was titled "What it takes to make you burst." The idea of this comes from Buddhist teachings. The idea of bursting...what it takes to make someone burst as in emotion. Just being taken over by your feelings. That in Buddhism is considered a very weak state of mind. It goes to show how un-firm our mind is.

The performance was a laborious process. My limbs start going numb by breathing out too much oxygen. I was breathing heavily during the performance. All it takes [to pop the balloon] supposedly is a needle. The needle represents something someone says; some insignificant thing that can trigger you to go crazy.

TCV: Are there specific artists who inspire your work? Are there any recurring themes throughout your work?

DL: There are two art pieces that I am currently drawing many of my inspirations from: Marina Abramovic's The Lovers: The Great Wall Walk and Damien Hirst's The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living. To me, these two pieces represent the two extremes: the sentimental, the spontaneous, and passion versus the logical, the intellectual, and matter-of-fact. In 1988, when Marina and her lover Ulay decided to break up, they went to China and walked from the opposite ends of the Great Wall. When they finally met in the middle after 90 days of walking, they talked, kissed, and said farewell to each other. The Physical Impossibility, on the other hand, is logical and meditative. The artwork itself is a dead shark preserved in a glass tank that is filled with formaldehyde. On an intellectual level, we all know that we are going to die at some point, maybe tomorrow, but if we check with ourselves honestly, we think death will never fall upon us, at least not tomorrow. In this great contrast between our intellectual understanding and honest awareness, Damien Hirst reminds us of this

great truth of death.

My work draws influences from these two pieces of work. My work is about the great truths across cultures. Some of the topics include: death and impermanence, the benefit of cherishing others, universal compassion, and topics that may offer opportunities for meditation and contemplation. However, I will also be exploring the spontaneity of these topics and strive for a balance in the confrontation between the intellectual and the spiritual.

TCV: Would you say that the artworks you create all have a purpose? Or will you create something and later on they will exhibit some sort of specific

meaning?

DL: The purpose doesn't matter much to me [about my work]. Take the example of me blowing up a balloon. I have an idea to start with and I present that idea, and you see the work coming from that idea but you definitely think of things I don't think about. I can try my best to convey my ideas.

TCV: What inspires you to make art?

DL: I think its the urge to create. I just want to create stuff that really fascinates me. Be it painting, drawing, doing sculpture, or performance of all these mediums.. It's coming from a place of wanting to create and do stuff for people to see. •



ORDER #36

RICARDO OLEA
CONTRIBUTOR

Her eyes felt heavy and swollen. She felt a strong breeze coming from the ocean that was less than half a mile away. As she crossed the street to walk towards a Wendy's, a car hit its brakes and missed her by only a few inches. Naturally she would have jumped and shrieked, but instead she looked at the headlights and slowly moved her head to meet the eyes of the driver. At first she couldn't make out what his mouth was saying, but it was obvious that he was in a frenzy. He shook his hands in the air and the only thing she was able to read from his moving mouth was "Fuckin' idiot!" She stared at him as he continued to curse at her and wave his hands in rage. As he moved his hands in the air, she couldn't help but to picture him in a chef's costume with an oversized cook's hat; his hand in the air with his thumb sealed to his middle and index finger like an Italian chef in the movies.

She only smiled at him, the kind of smile that says, "Sorry" and proceeded to cross the street. Her entire vision and all of her thoughts were captivated by the car that almost hit her. When she looked up, she was surprised to see the crowd on the opposite side of the street walking towards her. When she got to the other side of the street she looked back at the same spot she was standing seconds ago and wondered how she was now on the other side. With every step she took, she felt every muscle move in her legs. The closer she got to Wendy's, the slower she walked. She made a complete stop once she got to the front of it. All she could think about was the crispy french fries and the sizzling Dr. Pepper she was about to buy. As she got in line to order, she remembered that she needed to use the restroom. She had been looking down at her phone since she entered because she had ran out of eyedrops. Her eyes still felt heavy and swollen, and now in line with a crowd around her, she felt as if everyone was staring at her. She made a quick glance up in hopes of finding the restroom door on her first look. She didn't want to look up or have people look at her, so as soon as she recognized the small triangle with sticks coming out of it with a circle on top, she quickly made her way there.

She made her way into the first available stall and was surprised to see a large woman with her black jeans on the floor looking at her phone.

"Oh my god I am so sorry! I thought no one was in here!" she frantically said followed by a huge burst of laughter. She immediately closed the door and went to the stall farthest from the one she had just open. This time she knocked and when she heard no response she proceeded to walk in. She let out a sigh of relief as her bladder seemed to deflate. As she stood in front of the mirror while washing her hands, she realized she was wearing sunglasses. That whole time she was worried and paranoid that people would notice her

she slowly responded,

"Can I get a medium order of french fries with a large Dr. Pepper, two chicken sandwiches from the value menu, two cheese burgers and uhh... a large Oreo shake."

"Did you want to get the cheese burger combo? It comes with fries and a drink and it's a lot cheaper."

"Okay, let's do that. Also add a medium number 9. She laughed and shrugged her shoulders at the cashier. He grabbed her debit card, handed her a receipt and told her to wait for her order number to be called.

She took the high wooden stool closest to her and waited. Her eyes were staring out of the huge glass window, but her thoughts were elsewhere. She felt like she was forgetting something. When she took her phone out of her pocket, she looked at the time as if it would remind her. The phone read 2:13 p.m. She got distracted by the Twitter notification that was underneath the time. She went through her entire Twitter feed before realizing her number was being called.

"Order number 36! Order number 36!" shouted the other cashier who seemed a lot older than the guy who took her order. She hopped off the stool and leaned over to get her food.

Carrying a huge paper bag, she walked out. The walk from Wendy's to the beach wasn't a long walk at all, but to her it felt like she was walking miles. When her feet felt the hot silky sand, she looked around to find her friends. They all sat underneath the green umbrella that had pictures of what seemed to be palm trees from far way. She held the paper bag in one hand and her slippers in the other. She had to make high and long strides because the sand felt heavy on her feet. When she reached her friends, she dropped the paper bag on the towel and let herself fall on the beach chair that was underneath the umbrella.

"That took you so long dude," one of her friends said to her. She looked at her and realized that she had the same pale, heavy and swollen eye look as she did.

"I almost got hit by a car" she laughed.

When the friend who greeted her realized the paper bag read Wendy's, she blurted while simultaneously laughing, "What the fuck is this? We told you to go to McDonald's, not Wendy's!" •

Carrying a huge paper bag, she walked out. The walk from Wendy's to the beach wasn't a long walk at all, but to her it felt like she was walking miles. When her feet felt the hot silky sand, she looked around to find her friends. They all sat underneath the green umbrella that had pictures of what seemed to be palm trees from far way.

eyes, but had forgotten that she was wearing sunglasses.

She stood in front of the mirror and stared at herself without the glasses. Her face was a lighter tan than usual. It was almost pale. Her hair was dark and straight. Her shirt was completely covered by a picture of 2pac and her shorts went down halfway between her knee and hip. The shirt hugged her body and was tucked underneath her shorts. She lifted her hand to touch her face, but was startled when someone walked in. She let out a small chuckle and walked out before the door was able to close. Her nose took a huge sniff of the aroma coming from the fried food. Her body swayed to the cashier when she saw there was no line. She still had those french fries and Dr. Pepper in mind, but as she took a long look at the menu she wanted more.

"Hello, welcome to Wendy's, how can I help you?" The young cashier asked. He looked at her, and when he realized her eyes and the indecisive look on her face, he smirked and nodded his head. With the same smirk on her face



Photo courtesy Stephen Bennett

Bands Have Rights Too: A Conversation With MOBROC Co-President Connor Gowland

**KATIE FRICKE
AND
STEPHEN BENNETT**
CONTRIBUTORS

The time is 9:20 in the evening- 10 minutes until the show begins- and we're sitting in the room of MOBROC Co-President, Connor Gowland. Of course things are a bit rushed. The guitarist just got back from the ER after splitting open his finger in the door, but for the love of music, the show must go on!

MOBROC stands for Musicians Organized for Band Rights on Campus, and tonight one of its bands, Hieronymus Mosh, is performing in the barn, the official home of the organization. A range of genres of music have been played within MOBROC, including progressive rock, alternative, country, and funk. This year's bands so far include the Jack Beal Quartet, which is a jazz group, Freaky Frogs, and Hieronymus Mosh, who play covers of rock songs. Here's our very enthusiastic conversation with Hieronymus Mosh:

THE COLLEGE VOICE: Your definition of MOBROC?

CONNOR GOWLAND: A place, a physical and club space, for musicians to come together and make something more of themselves, to, like, make a band and meet other people with similar musical interests and actually doing something with their music ability... doing something that brings more people together, doing something that brings an audience enjoyment. Literally, we're all just amateur musicians having fun and learning. Last year we had a band called Canopy and they wrote songs, they recorded songs, I recorded songs with them, and it just goes to show that MOBROC's dope and it allows people to create art together, and I've never seen an organization like it. I just get

to jam with my friends, and the barn is right there for anyone to use with a drum set and a guitar and a piano and amps and cool lights, it's really amazing.

TCV: Who's the other Co-President?

CG: Oh, my twin sister Haley. She was supposed to be here now but she sucks.

TCV: What made you guys decide to stick to covers?

CG: We basically started out trying to please the audience. We wanted to play songs that would really get people going at shows, and I've always wanted to play in a pop-punk band. I mean, we literally just started with our set being Blink-182 and our own pop-punk version of Blank Space by Taylor Swift. It was a lot of stuff like that, and we eventually adapted into more of an alternative field, playing stuff like Talking Heads and more classics. And of course we still do some songs for ourselves; for example, we're learning Foxy Lady for tonight and I had never heard that before today, so I'm still learning the lyrics [laughs nervously] Our lead guitarist is incredible, he's the best guitarist I've ever met, I mean, he's playing the show tonight with one finger missing because he's a friggin... but he's playing without a finger and he's still the best guitarist I'll ever meet. But anyway, it's nice to play some stuff that showcases our own musical talents a little bit more. It's kind of a combination of selling out and having fun and doing our own thing.

TCV: How'd you guys get started?

MERIDAN: So, Connor, David, and Harry all lived on the same floor last year and they knew each other because of that and Connor and Harry were like, "let's start a band" and Harry knew David, and Connor knew me and then we were kind of just recruited and that's how it happened.

TCV: What is it like to play at a show with everyone there?

CG: Oh man, I mean the feeling's surreal to be on stage with three of my best friends, performing stuff we've practiced and crafted together, even if it is just a cover. It's something that brought the four of us together. I probably wouldn't be as good friends with Harry and David and Meridan if it weren't for our band, I mean, tonight's our band-iver-

sary! They're, like, my core-four- we even chose to live together this year in, like, Larrabee... Well, I got a bad lottery number and then forced them to join me. Playing with people you love, and playing with an audience- the funny thing about covers is that everyone knows it and everyone sings along- and you're leading this entire barn of people who are singing and screaming, it's just all so fun. •

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